Municipal Affairs

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

This Business Plan for the three years commencing April 1, 2001 was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Government Accountability Act* and the government's accounting policies. All of the government's policy decisions as at April 3, 2001 with material economic or fiscal implications of which I am aware have been considered in preparing the Business Plan.

The Ministry's priorities outlined in the Business Plan were developed in the context of the government's business and fiscal plans. I am committed to achieving the planned results laid out in this Business Plan.

[ORIGINAL SIGNED]

Guy Boutilier, *Minister of Municipal Affairs*
April 10, 2001

INTRODUCTION

Our province has a dynamic economy built on the *Alberta Advantage*. This, combined with a rapidly growing population, has produced a multitude of economic opportunities. Alberta residents and businesses – both established and new – will continue taking advantage of these opportunities in the coming years.

This growth puts increased demands on provincial and municipal resources. Alberta Municipal Affairs is meeting this challenge by providing extensive support to local governments. Within the two program areas – Local Government Services and Public Safety – the department provides a focused and coordinated approach in delivering programs and services to municipalities. The program areas have strong links with each other and with the municipalities they serve, enabling them to function as a team to address the needs.

Now that we are in the 21st century, partnership, collaboration and cooperation are taking on even greater importance. We will continue to foster partnerships that ensure Albertans live in safe and sustainable communities and are served by open, effective and accountable governments.

BUSINESS PLAN SETTING

A number of current issues and evolving challenges confront the Ministry and will shape the new three-year business plan:

- continued pressures on local services, facilities, and infrastructure caused by growth of the Alberta economy, changing demographics and environmental factors that affect local communities;
- the need to improve the standardization of the property assessment system to ensure efficiency, uniformity, and equity;
- the need to clarify and potentially redefine provincial-municipal relationships to improve service quality, efficiency, and accountability;
- the need to cooperatively address the challenges facing small municipalities; and
- financial pressures facing municipalities.

VISION

Improved services through sustainable, cooperative local government.

MISSION

Alberta Municipal Affairs works in partnership with Alberta's municipalities, other government departments, local authorities, various organizations focused on local issues, and the private sector to ensure Albertans live in safe and sustainable communities and are served by open, effective and accountable governments.

LINKS TO THE GOVERNMENT BUSINESS PLAN

The Ministry supports the Government's three core businesses in these ways:

- by helping **People** to be safe and self-reliant, through the Ministry's safety and emergency preparedness services;
- by promoting Alberta's **Prosperity** and the Alberta Advantage by encouraging the development of an efficient local government sector that provides the services, facilities, and infrastructure that Albertans and businesses need;
- by **Preserving** Alberta's traditions and priorities that support sustainable and safe communities that are responsive to their citizens.

CROSS MINISTRY INITIATIVES

Alberta Municipal Affairs supports the following cross ministry initiatives:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY ("GET READY ALBERTA")

Alberta Municipal Affairs contributes to Alberta's economic development strategy through a variety of activities centred on local government. Through various grants and programs that encourage self-reliant communities, the department contributes to the *Alberta Advantage*. As a result, a high priority is given to programs such as the Regional Partnership Initiative. This initiative assists municipalities and stakeholders to create effective and efficient regional partnerships that attract and retain investment and offer high quality living standards in a globally competitive environment.

ALBERTA CORPORATE SERVICE CENTRE INITIATIVE

Alberta Municipal Affairs supports the cross ministry initiative to create and implement a premier shared services model in Alberta that has a strong corporate culture, significant cost savings and reinvestment opportunities, increased efficiencies in service delivery, effective business partnerships, and one that promotes innovation. The Ministry is actively participating in initiatives to consolidate transactional and other non-strategic services in the areas of finance, human resources, information technology and general administration, and is managing the transition through effective planning and communication.

CORPORATE HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

A Corporate Human Resource Development Strategy is being implemented across government to address the aging of the public service, competition for scarce resources and rapidly changing skill needs. Alberta Municipal Affairs supports this initiative and has implemented internal strategies such as corporate learning, leadership development, recruitment and continuity planning.

ABORIGINAL POLICY INITIATIVE

Alberta Municipal Affairs supports this strategy through specific initiatives and by tailoring elements of General Application Programs to meet the needs of Aboriginal people and communities where appropriate.

CORE BUSINESSES

The Ministry's core business activities support the vision and mission of the Ministry. They are:

- **Local Government Services** – providing support services, policies and legislation that enhance the development of a sustainable, accountable, responsive and effective local government sector
- **Safety Services and Fire Protection** – administering a safety system that provides uniform application of appropriate safety codes and standards and promotion of fire protection throughout the province
- **Disaster Services** – managing provincial disaster planning and recovery programs and supporting municipalities to ensure their preparedness to deal with major emergencies and disasters

The Ministry also includes the Municipal Government Board, an independent quasi-judicial tribunal that adjudicates on matters specified under the *Municipal Government Act.*

MAJOR CLIENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The Ministry's primary clients include municipalities and their related organizations and associations, accredited organizations, and industry-based safety and emergency planning groups. The Ministry consults and works with the local government sector, with the public and industry, and with other provincial and federal departments as an integral and on-going part of its activities.

MAJOR GOALS

The Ministry's major goals are:

1. an effective, responsive, cooperative and well-managed local government sector;
2. financially sustainable and accountable municipalities;
3. a uniform and equitable property assessment system in which stakeholders have confidence;
4. a comprehensive safety system that provides an appropriate level of public safety; and
5. a disaster services program that enhance and supports local emergency preparedness for major emergencies and disasters.

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BUSINESS PLAN GOALS, KEY RESULTS, AND STRATEGIES

CORE BUSINESS 1: LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES

GOAL 1: AN EFFECTIVE, RESPONSIVE, COOPERATIVE AND WELL-MANAGED LOCAL GOVERNMENT SECTOR

KEY RESULTS	KEY STRATEGIES
• Support systems and programs that support excellence in local governance, management, and service delivery.	• Work with municipalities to create effective and efficient regional partnerships that can create an atmosphere to attract and retain investment, compete globally and contribute to a high quality of life. • Encourage municipalities to cooperate with their neighbours to develop and implement improved and more efficient service delivery systems. • Develop and implement a program for encouraging the self-evaluation of excellence to assist municipalities and citizens in developing innovative strategies for more effective governance, administration, financial management and service delivery. • Support municipalities to effectively use technology in their operations through one-window access and other initiatives in partnership with Alberta Government Services and Alberta Innovation and Science. • Develop and coordinate education and information services that include training programs, job exchanges, on-line information, and workshops for local elected officials, administrators, staff, and related professionals. • Work with municipalities to be leaders in the reduction of greenhouse gas emission and other climate change initiatives. • Participate in efforts to enhance relations between aboriginal groups and municipal governments in Alberta.
• Resolution of local and inter-municipal governance and management issues through responsive and effective Ministry support.	• Provide governance, administration and management, and land-use planning advice to local governments and associated local service delivery organizations. • Support municipal cooperation and self-directed dispute resolution through mediation and facilitation.
• A coordinated provincial government approach towards municipalities.	• Clarify the government's working relationship with municipalities and develop a mechanism to address major municipal-provincial issues.
• A legislative framework that enables municipalities to operate successfully and meet the local needs of Albertans.	• Develop changes to the provincial legislation and regulations related to municipalities that support innovative and improved approaches to local governance and service delivery and that will also result in a more streamlined legislative framework. • Work cooperatively with other ministries, municipalities, and other organizations to improve the provision, coordination and delivery of programs, policies and services that enhance local service effectiveness and efficiency.

GOAL 2: FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE AND ACCOUNTABLE MUNICIPALITIES

KEY RESULTS	KEY STRATEGIES
• Appropriate Ministry services and systems are in place to support financially sustainable municipalities.	• Maintain the Ministry's financial monitoring systems that provide evidence of municipal financial capacity and provide continued advisory support to municipalities. • Assist municipalities to examine and pursue innovative approaches and restructuring that will enhance their financial strength.
• Financial support that enhances local government financial capability.	• Administer the Unconditional Municipal Grant Program to provide ongoing financial assistance in support of municipal programs. The Ministry will examine new formulae and options to enhance the effectiveness of the program. • Administer the Municipal Sponsorship Program, which targets assistance to specific municipal needs, including promoting inter-municipal cooperation and innovative projects. • Administer the Grants in Place of Taxes program to provide appropriate grants to municipalities for properties owned by the province. • Develop and administer new grant initiatives targeted at municipalities. • Administer the Municipal Debenture Interest Rebate Program to subsidize the interest costs on certain municipal borrowings from the Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation.

GOAL 3: A UNIFORM AND EQUITABLE PROPERTY ASSESSMENT SYSTEM IN WHICH STAKEHOLDERS HAVE CONFIDENCE

KEY RESULTS	KEY STRATEGIES
• An equitable and efficient property assessment system in Alberta.	• Enhance, develop and maintain assessment standards and procedures through timely advice, consistent assessments and audits, the establishment of handbooks and professional guides and by ensuring that practices and methodologies are current. • Support the property assessment system by providing timely and accurate linear assessments. • Improve the assessment, equalization, and education requisition processes by facilitating appropriate sharing of data on assessments and building permits. • Implement improved assessment procedures in response to approved recommendations from MLA committees.

CORE BUSINESS 2: SAFETY SERVICES AND FIRE PROTECTION

GOAL 4: A COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF PUBLIC SAFETY

KEY RESULTS	KEY STRATEGIES
• Appropriate codes and standards.	• Maintain appropriate provincial codes and standards in consultation with the Safety Codes Council, the public, industry, and other jurisdictions. • Participate in reviews of the national and international codes and standards that are used in Alberta.
• Codes and Standards are applied uniformly, effectively and efficiently.	• Enhance environmental protection through the development and implementation of a program for remediation of underground petroleum storage tank sites. • Enhance the administration and application of safety codes and standards by providing support and advisory services. Part of this strategy is a project to develop, in partnership with municipalities, a provincial electronic permit system. • Support municipalities and other partners to participate in partnerships such as Regional Service Commissions. • Promote public awareness and understanding of the purpose and value of codes and standards adopted under the *Safety Codes Act*.
• Reduced personal and property loss resulting from preventable fires.	• Promote public awareness of fire safety and prevention through educational programs and dissemination of fire safety information through all media. • Encourage establishment of local or regional coalitions to promote fire safety. • Develop and implement methods to effectively coordinate activities aimed at preventing and reducing fire loss.
• Access to quality training for fire departments in a format allowing for maximum participation.	• Support to the Alberta Fire Training School to enhance its training programs. • Provide training for municipal fire protection officials by administering grant programs for training by private sector resources. • Provide fire investigation upgrade training through Safety Codes Officer Training Initiative and other co-operative training programs.

CORE BUSINESS 3: DISASTER SERVICES

GOAL 5: A DISASTER SERVICES PROGRAM THAT ENHANCES AND SUPPORTS LOCAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR MAJOR EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS

KEY RESULTS	KEY STRATEGIES
• Timely and effective response to disasters and emergencies.	• Enhance the preparedness of municipalities to deal with actual emergencies by assisting them to develop and test their emergency plans. • Provide disaster financial assistance to complement local government resources, share costs at a provincial level and facilitate federal cost sharing whenever possible. • Expand the provincial Emergency Public Warning System. • Ensure a coordinated provincial response to major emergencies and disasters by regularly reviewing, testing and modifying the province's emergency plans in conjunction with involved departments. • Continue to work with Government departments to ensure Business Resumption Plans are in place. • Enhance the work of the Alberta Emergency Preparedness Partnership by providing leadership, facilitating partnership operations and coordinating the delivery of programs. • Support First Nations with ongoing review and development of emergency preparedness resources, advice, and disaster response coordination. • Support training for provincial and municipal emergency preparedness officials by administering grant programs for training. • Ensure that federal-provincial disaster assistance arrangements are consistently and equitably applied by working with other provincial departments, provinces and territories to facilitate meaningful negotiations with the federal government.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Staff from six specialized areas – Business Planning and Corporate Support, Communications, Financial Services, Human Resource Services, Information Technology, and Legal Services – provide support to the operating divisions in achieving their business plan goals and strategies. These areas support the business plan through key initiatives and strategies that affect the entire Ministry.

Business Planning and Corporate Support provides strategic leadership and guidance, and coordinates corporate activities to deliver Ministry initiatives in an effective, timely and consistent manner. This office is responsible for business planning and performance measurement, legislative planning, information access and privacy protection for the Ministry, and central administrative services.

Communications provides strategic communications advice and support to assist the Ministry to communicate effectively with its stakeholders and to ensure that Albertans have access to the information they need on the role, programs and initiatives of Alberta Municipal Affairs.

Financial Services directs the Ministry's financial, reporting and budgetary activities, in a shared services environment and is responsible for ensuring an accountability framework is in place to meet the obligations of management, the *Financial Administration Act* and the *Government Accountability Act.*

Human Resource Services provides strategic direction to support the vision that Ministry staff are respected for their attitudes, knowledge and skills, their effective management of public policy and their dedication to achieving quality, affordable services for Albertans.

The **Information Technology/CIO's Office** supports the Ministry on matters relating to telecommunications and information technology, and provides guidance and frameworks for our departmental Information Technology (IT) plans and initiatives to meet the goals of the Ministry. This office acts as the link between our IT service providers and our lines of business as well as representing the ministry on IT committees and initiatives across the government.

Legal Services provides effective legal and related services to support the Ministry in achieving its goals and initiatives through the provision of strategic and solution-oriented advice and representation.

GOALS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	SOURCE	HISTORICAL/CURRENT BASELINE	TARGET
Goal 1: An effective, responsive, cooperative and well-managed local government sector.	Level of satisfaction with the Local Government Services Division's activities, services, programs, and legislative framework in enabling and promoting a cooperative and well-managed local government sector. The measure will be calculated based upon percentage of the units within Local Government Services that achieved their performance targets. The individual performance targets for each of the units used in the calculation of the overall performance ranges from 65% to 90%.	Annual survey satisfaction	2000/01 Target – 75%	2001/02 – 77% (Average) 2002/03 – 78% 2003/04 – 80%
Goal 2: Financially sustainable and accountable municipalities.	Percentage of municipalities meeting the Ministry's criteria of financial sustainability. The key criteria are based on legislation contained within the *Municipal Government Act*. The measure will be calculated based on a point system weighting the criteria. Municipalities exceeding a set point limit will be considered not to have met the criteria for municipal sustainability.	Ministry's municipal financial monitoring system	Target set at 90%	2001/02 – 95% 2002/03 – 95% 2003/04 – 95%
Goal 3: A uniform and equitable property assessment system in which stakeholders have confidence.	Percentage of municipal assessment rolls which meet provincial standards for procedures, uniformity, and equity.	Ministry audit/ review procedures	1996/97 – 66% 1997/98 – 88% 1998/99 – 93% 1999/00 – 96%	2000/01 – 95% 2001/02 – 95% 2002/03 – 95% 2003/04 – 95%
Goal 4: A comprehensive safety system that provides an appropriate level of public safety.	1. The percentage of assessed accredited municipalities, corporations, agencies, and delegated administrative organizations administering the *Safety Codes Act* that achieve a satisfactory rating.	Ministry monitoring system	Satisfaction rating achieved 1998/99 – 77% 1999/00 – 92% 2000/01 – 93% (3rd quarter)	2000/01 – 90% 2001/02 – 90% 2002/03 – 95% 2003/04 – 95%
	2. The percentage of surveyed clients satisfied with the effectiveness of safety codes program.	Annual Ministry Survey will be administered in 2000/01. Actual will be used to establish targets for future years.	Baseline to be established in 2001/02	Maintain or improve
	3. Reduction in personal and property loss due to preventable fires. 2000/01 Benchmark: • Fire deaths and deaths involving fires: less than 40 • Fire injuries: less than 400 • Fire losses in property: less than $140 million • Reported number of fires: 6,500	Annual fire loss statistics	Baseline to be established in 2001/02	Maintain or improve

GOALS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	SOURCE	HISTORICAL/CURRENT BASELINE	TARGET
Goal 5: A disaster services program that enhances and supports local emergency preparedness for major emergencies and disasters.	1. Achieve a level of 100% of claims where a member of the damage assessment team arrives on-site within 30 day of a claim being received.	Ministry processing data	1996/97 – 99.7% 1997/98 – 100% 1998/99 – N/A 1999/00 – 100%	2000/01 – 100% 2001/02 – 100% 2002/03 – 100% 2003/04 – 100%
	2. Level of preparedness testing as measured by the percentage of municipalities, required to have emergency plans under the *Disaster Services Act*, that test their emergency plans through exercises within a four-year cycle. Target is to test 100% of 25% of municipalities (one quarter) each year over a four-year cycle. If more than one quarter of municipalities test their plans in a year, the Actual will exceed 100%.	Ministry operational data	1998/99 – 160% 1999/00 – 280%	2000/01 – 100% 2001/02 – 100% 2002/03 – 100% 2003/04 – 100%

Expense by Core Business

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 1999-2000 Actual	Comparable 2000-01 Budget	Comparable 2000-01 Prelim. Actual	2001-02 Estimates	2002-03 Target	2003-04 Target
EXPENSE						
Core Business						
Local Government Services	108,297	117,086	124,075	117,363	117,959	118,274
Safety Services and Fire Protection	9,167	18,599	20,770	79,685	9,829	10,016
Disaster Services	12,107	2,845	13,944	3,654	3,688	3,730
Municipal Government Board	2,589	2,293	2,709	2,482	2,509	2,543
MINISTRY EXPENSE	132,160	140,823	161,498	203,184	133,985	134,563

Ministry Statement of Operations

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 1999-2000 Actual	Comparable 2000-01 Budget	Comparable 2000-01 Prelim. Actual	2001-02 Estimates	2002-03 Target	2003-04 Target
REVENUE						
Internal Government Transfers	10,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
Transfers from Government of Canada	3,288	420	3,918	496	496	496
Premiums, Fees and Licences	730	459	591	376	376	376
Other Revenue	6,188	1,307	1,476	1,531	1,531	1,531
MINISTRY REVENUE	20,206	14,186	17,985	14,403	14,403	14,403
EXPENSE						
Program						
Ministry Support Services	9,482	7,972	10,035	10,067	10,156	10,282
Local Government Services	102,957	112,703	118,557	111,827	112,375	112,620
Public Safety	17,417	18,301	30,759	79,371	9,513	9,693
Municipal Government Board	2,042	1,847	2,147	1,919	1,941	1,968
Valuation Adjustments and Other Provisions	262	-	-	-	-	-
MINISTRY EXPENSE	132,160	140,823	161,498	203,184	133,985	134,563
Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Capital Assets	(69)	-	-	-	-	-
NET OPERATING RESULT	(112,023)	(126,637)	(143,513)	(188,781)	(119,582)	(120,160)

Consolidated Net Operating Result

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 1999-2000 Actual	Comparable 2000-01 Budget	Comparable 2000-01 Prelim. Actual	2001-02 Estimates	2002-03 Target	2003-04 Target
Ministry Revenue	20,206	14,186	17,985	14,403	14,403	14,403
Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments	(10,000)	(12,000)	(12,000)	(12,000)	(12,000)	(12,000)
Consolidated Revenue	10,206	2,186	5,985	2,403	2,403	2,403
Ministry Program Expense	132,160	140,823	161,498	203,184	133,985	134,563
Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments	-	-	-	-	-	-
Consolidated Program Expense	**132,160**	**140,823**	**161,498**	**203,184**	**133,985**	**134,563**
Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Capital Assets	(69)	-	-	-	-	-
CONSOLIDATED NET OPERATING RESULT	(122,023)	(138,637)	(155,513)	(200,781)	(131,582)	(132,160)